

Public Health

Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health in the "You have 24 hours to save the NHS" government has confirmed that **Queen Mary's Hospital** is to be stripped of its A & E department, Maternity unit and Paediatric wards. We do not regard the battle as over. Watch this space! *Separate leaflet issued.* **Barnard Medical Practice** in Granville Road will be closed and transferred to the space occupied by Queen Mary's maternity unit as soon as this is closed down. We will see whether the opportunity will be taken by private companies to fleece those who choose to travel to the new clinic by car.

◆ Traffic and Transport

The predicted congestion following closure of **Station Road** to Northbound traffic has materialised. We can only hope that demolition/construction at Athena House commences only after the renewal of the gas mains. We have been promised action against the selfish idiots who park on double yellow lines at the junction of **Hatherley Road** and the High Street forcing buses to mount the pavement in order to negotiate the diversion. Following the removal of the traffic lights at **Elm Road/The Green** junction, a raised platform has been provided to encourage drivers to slow down and "is for the benefit of pedestrians". The young, agile and brave should take note. No crossing can be provided due to development restrictions on The Green.

◆ Membership, Publicity and Administration

The Group has **7 Committee**, **22 Full** and **104 Associate** members.

◆ Other News

Bexley's three **MPs chalked up a massive £385,000 expenses** bill last year at the expense of the taxpayer. This was in addition to their annual salary of £61,820. John Austin, Labour MP for Erith and Thamesmead was Bexley's most expensive MP and claimed the 13th highest expenses of London MPs. Sidcup's MP Derek Conway was the 41st most expensive MP. Like Austin, he claimed the maximum £23,000 for a second home despite having a flat in Westminster. John Austin has called for a "wholesale independent review of the whole system". **Zippos Circus** will not be visiting Sidcup this year following 20 years of successful seasons. The Council has increased rental charge for Sidcup Place to over £6,000.

Following the launch of "**Library Plus**" which saw books making way for Computers and snack machines, it is to be hoped that Bexley Council will not be taking a leaf out of Gloucester Council's book. Apparently, traditional Library silence is not cool anymore and is being replaced by piped music. A spokesman for Gloucester Council said "Staff are happy to turn down the sound if it is disturbing visitors. Libraries are not just about books any more". Hopefully, piped music will help to soothe the anger of visiting motorists if the Council presses ahead with its plans to close the Bexleyheath parking office and force library staff to collect fines. Perspex protective screening will not be practical but police may be stationed in the library to protect staff.



No. 9 Jun-Jul 2009

Sidcup Community Group

Established in 2002

Newsletter

No. 9 Jun - Jul 2009

Our Newsletters detail local issues along with a summary of news appearing in the local press. They are distributed regularly to members only. If you have received a copy and wish to be kept informed, let us know. Please pass this onto a neighbour when you have read it. We apologise for any duplication of content if you are an email subscriber. We do not regard this as junk mail but let us know if you disagree

Who are we?

The **Sidcup Community Group** is an independent and apolitical group. If you wish to be kept informed on Sidcup issues, email or call us:
Email: sidcupcommunitygroup@hotmail.com
Tel: **07092 208302** (message service)

◆ Crime and Policing

During recent weeks, youths had been observed carrying **iron bars** in Craybrooke Road and an **un-tipped sword** in Station Road.

It is to be hoped that the new **Safer Transport Team** will benefit the residents of Sidcup. The team, based at Bexleyheath Broadway which has had to be heavily policed during school times, claim to have reduced bus crime by 73%.

What a sad state of affairs that such measures are necessary, especially as TFL has consistently told the Group that bus crime is not a problem.

Police are using Alcohol Testing kits to clamp down on **under-age drinking** especially in parks. This is a reflection on how easy it is for teenagers to purchase alcohol.

Congratulations to Blendon and Penhill Safer Neighbourhood team who were nominated for the first **Keep Safe awards** for their work with youngsters. Residents have been warned about a series of **thefts from Cash machines in Sidcup High Street**. One of the thieves will advise the victim of a fault in the machine whilst the others withdraw cash. The thefts have occurred exclusively in the morning and the thieves target residents aged over 50.

Police Street Briefings in 2009. Please attend if you have concerns:

- **11/062009** - 19:30 - 20:30 - Burnt Oak Lane J/W Welbeck Road
- **02/07/2009** - 19:00 - 19:45 - Lansdown Road J/W The Drive
- **23/07/2009** - 19:30 - 20:30 - Hatherley Road J/W Langford Place Drive

Contact number for Police non-emergency services: 0300 123 1212
Call 999 if there is any danger, risk to life or a crime in progress.

◆ Planning, Licensing and the High Street

Athena House. Regrettably, the planning inspector overturned the Council's decision and gave full approval to the brass-clad development. He felt that our concerns over inadequate lifts, inadequate parking and traffic generation did not justify refusing planning permission. The Group will write to Ian Clements, Deputy Mayor and previous leader of Bexley Council to suggest introduction of best-practice guidelines. *Separate leaflet issued.*

Plans have been released of the new Rotunda to replace the Civic Offices in Bexleyheath, due for completion by 2013. It is striking how the six storey building compliments and is at home with its surroundings!

15 Market Parade (the former driving centre). The developers have appealed against Bexley Council's refusal of their over-intensive plans. The inspectorate has ratified the decision and turned down the application. *Separate leaflet issued.*

Tailor's Chalk. The application by J D Wetherspoon to license the Hogshead in **Sidcup High Street** has been approved. An application to open beyond midnight on bank holiday weekends, Christams and New Year has been refused but it will nevertheless remain open until Midnight at weekends (23:30. with 30 minuted drinking up time). *Separate leaflet issued.*

St. John's Road Sub Station. An application has been submitted for development under D1 use which includes Places of Worship, Church Halls, Clinics, Health Centres, day nurseries, consulting room. This is of concern because it is proposed to open from 08.00 to 22.00 every day which could significantly impact on the area. The specific use is not disclosed which is worrying and we are approaching the developer directly.

The application number is **09/00578/OUT**. The officer at Bexley dealing is gordon.smith@bexley.gov.uk telephone **020 8308 7733**.

KFC. Following the opening of KFC take-away, 3 Market Parade there has been a substantial increase in littering of roads adjacent to the High Street. The group has coordinated action on this with communication being established with Bexley Council Street Cleaning, Enviro-crime, Planning and Environmental Health managers. We have also been in touch with the establishment itself and its regional office.

It is to be hoped that the obnoxious fumes experienced after they opened have been addressed by the belated fitting of the correct extraction equipment. *Separate leaflet issued.*

In a survey of our members, the **decline of Sidcup High Street** ranked the highest concern. We wish to see the Sustainable Communities Act used to bring improvements. The Group is also investigating the possibility of encouraging an independent Cinema to set up in Sidcup. We are absolutely astounded that at a recent meeting, Seb Salom, Head of Strategic Planning and Development at Bexley Council stated that it is "unknown" why Sidcup is declining. This statement comes from the Council which approved a town-centre supermarket and refuses to take action against Morrisons consistent breach of a number of planning regulations! *Separate leaflet issued.*

◆ The Environment

The Group continues to take direct action in removing illegal, disfiguring and (at road junctions) dangerous **fly-posters**. Several properties have been defaced with bills promoting a circus in Dartford and fairground in Woolwich. The Chronicle has highlighted the risk to **Sidcup Place**, one of Sidcup's only free outdoor leisure facilities. Some local councillors wish to remove free parking and seem unaware or unconcerned of the benefit derived by families. High volumes of **litter** have been observed in Sidcup place and action sought. Bexley Council has confirmed to the Group that no material collected for **recycling** finds its way to land-fill sites. They also assure residents that if, due to a shortage of vehicles different types of waste are not collected separately, the material is always segregated at the depot.

Bexley Council now recycles over 50% of collected household waste. We continue to press the Mayor's office for a direct response concerning **graffiti** on the railway track. We have written directly to Network rail and a response is awaited. We will write again pointing out that there are at least seventeen examples on the track between Charing Cross and Sidcup where warning and/or instruction notices such as speed restrictions have been obliterated by graffiti.

The council has attended to further graffiti at A20 underpass.